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## Tomato plants on Firth of Clyde seashores

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In September 2003 marine ecologists from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) were carrying out a visual assessment of algal cover on selected shores in the Clyde Sea area. A number of beaches were visited between Dunoon and Toward Point. Although the shore flora was not being surveyed, at one location, opposite Inellan Bowling Club, several tomato plants (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) were noted growing wild in the sand just above the strandline. In September 2006 the survey was repeated and tomato plants were observed at several sites between Dunoon and Toward. The approximate number of plants was as follows: five at Garshallow Burn (NS 161 736), two at picnic site (NS 158 719), 40 opposite Inellan Bowling Club (NS 150 702), eight at Newton Park (NS 141 691), and 16 near Toward Point (NS 136 671). The plants were growing in sand or shingle on the upper shore. Those at Garshallow were accompanied by a small sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), gone to seed. The group of tomatoes at Toward Point were growing around a suspected septic tank overflow discharge.

The tomato plants ranged in size from 10 to 60cm high. Many were still flowering and a small number had developed green fruits several centimetres in diameter. Wild tomatoes are well known as aliens around sewage works, as the pips survive passage through the human gut. Dickson *et al.* (2000) highlight the occurrence of tomatoes growing on the banks of the rivers Kelvin and Clyde downstream of sewage works. The coastal plants may originate from local septic tank overflows or perhaps sewage discharges further afield depending on how long the seeds can withstand immersion in seawater. Although good sized fruits are evident on some plants, none appeared to be ripening and it is not certain whether these green tomatoes would produce viable pips. However, it does appear that the tomatoes will continue to recur as wild plants on this part of the coast and are likely to persist, especially in warm summers, and as long as the supply of pips continues.

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## Comma *Polygonia c-album* L. at Chatelherault, Hamilton

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On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007 a comma butterfly was seen resting on a dogwood leaf at Chatelherault Country Park (NS735539). This was followed by the sighting of three butterflies together on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2007. These butterflies were feeding on creeping thistle (see Fig. 1) and occasionally landing on common nettle in the corner of a grazed field. Chatelherault Country Park is mixed woodland based around the Avon Gorge and associated ancient woodland. Preferred food plants of the comma (wych elm, nettle, bramble etc.) are in abundance.

This species seems to have been extinct in Scotland since the 1870s (Thomson, 1980) having previously been distributed as far north as Fifeshire (Duncan, 1840) but absent from the west. The variation in range and decline of populations of the comma over the last 170 or so years is due to climatic variables including cold winters and has been ascribed also to the reduction in hop planting in England (Emmet & Heath, 1989). Warmer weather and a switch in preferred food plant to common nettle seem to be helping the subsequent spread of the comma (Emmet & Heath, 1989). Recent warm winters have allowed it to expand in range through northern England and some records from southern Scotland suggest successful over-wintering (Futter *et al.*, 2006).



Fig. 1. Comma butterfly *Polygonia c-album* f. *hutchisoni* at Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton.

The butterfly has been identified from the photograph as a female *Polygona c-album* f. *hutchisoni* Robson. This variant is that of the summer generation with a uniformly paler ground colour of the under wing pattern, and shallower scallops to the edges as described by Emmet & Heath (1989).

Communicating this comma sighting locally has resulted in the reporting of a number of other records from the Hamilton/Motherwell area for 2007, including one from Calderglen Country Park in East Kilbride.

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## The ant woodlouse *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* in North Ayrshire

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The ant woodlouse *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* Brandt (Crustacea: Oniscidea) is a small, white, eyeless woodlouse inhabiting ant nests (Hopkin 1991). The very few Scottish records of this species are all from coastal sites. On the east coast it has been found near Inverkeithing, Fife (Harding & Sutton, 1985), and also near North Berwick, East Lothian and at Lundin Links near Lower Largo, Fife (G.B. Corbet, personal communication).

To the best of my knowledge, the only known site for this species in the west of Scotland is at Knockbrenn in Kirkcudbright (Collis & Collis, 2002). It is therefore interesting to record its presence in North Ayrshire. On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007 I found several individuals of *P. hoffmannseggii* in a nest of black ants situated in a very narrow strip of dune land between the shoreline and the boundary wall of West Kilbride Golf Club links at NS195476. The common rough woodlouse, *Porcellio scaber* Latreille, was also present in this ant nest.

At the time of writing the National Biodiversity Gateway website <http://www.searchubn.net/> shows a

record for *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii* at Eoropie Bay near the Butt of Lewis. The record comes from the Invertebrate Site Register for Scotland which is now held by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The metadata for this dataset warns that there are believed to be errors in the data. John McKinnell of SNH has kindly investigated this *P. hoffmannseggii* “record” for me and has confirmed that it is an error that had arisen from an attempt to reconcile a mismatch between a location and a grid reference in an old version of the database. The file at SNH has now been amended.

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## Corrigendum: Crowson’s record of 14-spot ladybird (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) at Cleghorn Glen

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On July 29<sup>th</sup> 1977, Roy Crowson collected a specimen of *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* (L.), the fourteen-spot ladybird, at Cleghorn Glen (Lanarkshire (VC77), c. NS890454). This specimen is in the collection at the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, and its identity is clear. However, in his account of this visit (Crowson, RA (1978); *Records of Coleoptera from Cleghorn Glen*; *Glasgow Naturalist* 19 (5): 384), it is ambiguously named as *Propylea quattuordecimguttata* (L.) which could be taken to mean *Calvia quattuordecimguttata* (the cream-spot ladybird). It is clear from the specimen that the error is in the species name, not in the genus: the suffix ‘guttata’ should be ‘punctata’.